



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good afternoon.

I was thrilled to see so many of our industry partners at the Arizona Tourism Unity Dinner last week! This great event brought together public and private tourism industry organizations and elected officials from across the state to celebrate the Arizona travel and tourism trade.

The Arizona Tourism Alliance (ATA) committee arranged a fantastic event at the Arizona Biltmore Resort & Spa with Robin Sewell, president of Arizona Highways Television, serving as the emcee.

Not only is the Unity Dinner a major fundraiser for the ATA, but it also an opportunity to honor individuals for their extraordinary support and service to Arizona's tourism industry.

This year, *Arizona Highways* Magazine was honored as the "2008 Tourism Advocate of the Year." For more than 80 years, *Arizona Highways* has captured the essence of Arizona time and again through spectacular photography of gorgeous Arizona destinations and intriguing stories of the state's history, land and people. Those of us in the industry owe a debt of gratitude to *Arizona Highways* Magazine, as it has inspired millions of people to explore this dynamic state.

During the event, special recognition was also given to people who helped to bring Super Bowl XLII to Arizona. AOT awarded the "Tourism Champion Award" to Arizona Super Bowl XLII Host Committee members Bob Sullivan, President, and Mike Kennedy, Chairman, as well as Michael Bidwell, Vice President of the Arizona Cardinals. The Greater Phoenix Convention and Visitors Bureau honored Brain Kearney, former President & CEO of the Downtown Phoenix Partnership, and Karen Churchard, Deputy Director of the Arizona Office of Tourism. John Junker, President & CEO of Fiesta Bowl, honored Ed Beasley, City Manager for the City of Glendale.

Congratulations to all of the award recipients and thank you for supporting Arizona tourism!

Have a great week.



Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

AOT Launches Arizona Music Program (AMP)

The Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT) has embarked upon a new project to encourage visitors to not only see Arizona but to *hear* Arizona.

AOT has developed the Arizona Music Project (AMP), a six-minute musical tribute to Arizona that captures the state's diverse geography, culture and heritage in music. In addition to the composition, a documentary was created to chronicle the journey of the musicians who contributed to the project.

Through AMP, the agency is generating awareness and expanding perceptions about Arizona by highlight the state's vibrant music scene. To launch the project, the agency is using MySpace.com, the popular social networking Web site, as a marketing tool. The project unites Arizona musicians in a modern way to provide a sensory experience that engages visitors and residents.

Among the 19 musicians who contributed to the project, there is a trio from the Phoenix Symphony, a slide guitarist from Payson, and a bass player from Show Low. Renowned classical guitarist Gabriel Ayala of the Yaqui Indian tribe lent his talents to AMP. Ayala has performed at venues around the world, including The John F. Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. Another gifted Arizona musician who contributed his unique brand of rock n' roll to the project was Nick Sterling, an Arizona musical prodigy who rose to fame playing guitar alongside major acts, including "The Black Crowes," "The Doobie Brothers," and "Blues Traveler."

The documentary including the music video, links to the musicians' Web sites, blogs and other interactive components can be found on www.myspace.com/arizonamusicproject and can also be access through www.Arizonaguide.com.

New Visitor Information Center Now Open!

"Welcome to Arizona! How can I help you?"

These words greet visitors upon entering the new Visitor Information Center located in downtown Phoenix. The center is the result of a dynamic business partnership between the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT) and the Greater Phoenix Convention & Visitors Bureau (GPCVB).

The state-of-the-art center is outfitted with nine 50-inch plasma screens programmed to highlight the Grand Canyon State's vibrant desert landscapes and endless amounts of tourism opportunities. Another eye-catcher is the touch-screen iMap, which allows visitors to learn about the Grand Canyon State by selecting a destination and accessing location specific information. The center is staffed by Visitor Service Specialists from both AOT and the GPCVB, who are prepared to assist with travel instructions to Arizona destinations.

The Visitor Center is located at 125 North Second Street, directly across from the Hyatt Regency Phoenix hotel. The facility is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Calling all 2008 Summer Events and 2009 Major Events

The Arizona Office of Tourism is considering publishing a summer calendar of events to encourage Arizonans to visit attractions in their home state. The calendar will include events that take place between Memorial Day and Labor Day across the state. Please make sure that all summer event information submitted is accurate and updated. If you find your information on www.ArizonaGuide.com, you will not need to resend the information.

Deadline for submission of 2008 summer events is March 27, 2008. Please note that due to the number of events that take place each summer, we will not be able to include every event within the printed summer calendar. However, all events submitted will be included in the online calendar at www.ArizonaGuide.com.

AOT's Research Section has been Updated

The following items have been updated in the Research and Statistics section of AOT's business-to-business Web site www.azot.gov.

- Gross Sales and Taxes December 2007
- Arizona Tourism Indicators 4th Quarter 2007

For additional information or questions, please contact Beth Billings, Research Specialist, at 602-364-3689 or via e-mail at bbillings@azot.gov.

SAVE the DATE: AOT's TEAM Grant Workshop March 14

The FY09 Teamwork for Effective Arizona Marketing grants guidelines are now available. TEAM is a matching-grant program offered to statewide destination marketing organizations and tribal entities to help develop or enhance their local marketing efforts. This grant program works in conjunction with AOT's national and regional advertising efforts encouraging a partnership between Arizona communities and AOT to help maintain a strong tourism industry throughout the Grand Canyon State. **Applications are due to the office for review by April 18, 2008.**

To download a copy of the guidelines please visit www.azot.gov. For FY09, AOT is encouraging TEAM applicants to develop strategic and innovative projects by providing a direct incentive of up to \$5,000 (no matching funds required), for projects that incorporate one of the following AOT initiatives: Branding, Arizona Origins or Go Green. Please read the FY09 TEAM Guidelines for specific information regarding eligibility for this new initiative.

FY09 TEAM grant applicants will be required to attend the TEAM workshop scheduled on March 14, 2008. If you have questions or need additional information regarding the FY09 TEAM grant program, please contact Glenn Schlottman at 602-364-3727 or gschlottman@azot.gov.

TEAM Workshop

March 14, 2008

10 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Tempe Center for the Arts

700 W. Rio Salado Parkway

Tempe, AZ 85281

Trippin' with AOT

Reach the Mexican Market at the 2nd Annual Arizona Road Show

AOT will target Mexican tour operators and travel agents at the 2nd Annual Arizona Road Show to be held in Mexico City and Guadalajara from May 5-9, 2008. The Road Show will highlight destination seminars for travel agents in Mexico City and Guadalajara, tour operator sales calls in Mexico City and a tour operator dinner in Guadalajara. Registration cost is \$1,995 per delegate and includes two nights accommodation in Mexico City and two nights accommodation in Guadalajara. For more information please contact Loretta Belonio at lbeldonio@azot.gov or 602-364-3725.

AOT Hosts 9th Annual Sales Mission in Las Vegas

The Arizona Office of Tourism along with other western states will be hosting the 9th Annual sales mission to meet with Japanese receptive operators in the Las Vegas area. These Las Vegas-based operators are important as they make and influence decisions for the tour companies they work for in Japan. The sales mission will take place on Saturday, April 19th and will be followed by a Golf Tournament. Participation costs are \$300 per supplier and \$350 per DMO. For more information please contact Osamu Hoshino at ohoshino@comcast.net or 801-266-3345.

Reach the Mexican Market at ARLAG

Each year the Airline Representatives Association of Guadalajara (ARLAG) coordinates a trade show for Mexican travel agents and travel suppliers. This well organized event is interesting because it not only attracts travel agents from Guadalajara and neighboring cities, but also travel agents from throughout Mexico. ARLAG will be held May 16, 2008 and brochure distribution will be available through the Arizona Office of Tourism at a cost of \$200, plus shipping. Space is limited to four companies. Please contact Kristy Swanson for more information, kswanson@azot.gov or 602-364-3696.

AOT Conducts Sales Mission to Mexico

The Arizona Office of Tourism conducted its annual sales mission to Mexico February 25 – 29, 2008. This year the focus was on three cities in northern Mexico with breakfast seminars being held in Chihuahua, Monterrey and Culiacan. More than 100 travel agents, airline representatives and travel professionals were in attendance. The “Buenos Dias Arizona” presentation, which highlighted shopping, family adventure and sports and sporting events, was well received. Delegations members included Mary Rittmann, Arizona Office of Tourism; Barbara Jackson, AOT’s representative in Mexico; Ashlee Ciora, Scottsdale CVB; Michael Martin, Tempe CVB; Kimberly Janes, City of Chandler; and Joyce Lingenfelter, Flagstaff CVB. For more information please contact Mary Rittmann at mrtrittmann@azot.gov or 602-364-3730.

Industry News

ITB Berlin Attracts Record Exhibitors

ITB 2008, the International Tourism Exchange, which will be held in Berlin March 5-9, is reporting record participation. "This year, we have broken through the 11,000 exhibitor barrier for the first time ever," said Dr. Christian Goke, managing director of Messe Berlin. A total of 11,147 exhibiting companies from 186 countries and regions will be showcased on Berlin's trade show site, up from 10,023 in 2007. Exhibitors include service providers such as hotels and airlines, tour operators and individual countries and regions. (www.ModernAgent.com, 3/3)

Sister Park Relationships Overcome Boundaries

Last month, the first United States/Mexico Sister Parks conference was held in more than four years. Topics of discussions at the three-day workshop were; how do we streamline cross-border communication and coordination; and how do parks and protected areas with different languages, regulations, governmental responsibilities and cultural norms, overcome all of the barriers that stand in the way of coordinating efforts to manage and protect similar, often related, natural and cultural resources? The conference abounded with examples of why parks and protected areas from different countries would want to work together.

Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument and El Pinacate/Gran Desierto del Altar Biosphere Reserve share a cultural heritage that goes back for centuries, but was separated and gradually forgotten after the creation of international boundaries. Today, Organ Pipe and El Pinacate are pooling their knowledge of the area's cultural history and of two languages to help local descendents of these ancient peoples reconnect with their heritage in ways as simple, and as meaningful, as helping them rediscover place names in their original language.

As the Chief of the National Park Service's (NPS) Office of International Affairs (OIA), Stephen Morris, put it, everyone present seemed to "understand clearly that conservation issues cannot be adequately addressed without the cooperation of partners and managers of other areas that share the same species or types of resources even if they cross an international border." He also noted that, "It was very clear from the high level of engagement of all the participants that they had been yearning for an opportunity to get together and make plans to work more closely together." All of which makes sense, private companies often streamline by ensuring that multiple divisions aren't duplicating work. Why shouldn't parks and agencies, even those in different countries, do the same thing?

While the group was not able to resolve all of the issues facing cross-border sister parks, they did accomplish a great deal. Each of the existing sister park participants left with draft action plans and specific potential projects identified for implementation. And at the agency level NPS and Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas (CONANP) are developing a framework, or umbrella action plan, that will incorporate both system-wide collaborative activities and the individual sister park proposals and projects.